

IN THE CLAIMS

7. A column comprising a plurality of axially spaced trays with a distance of a tray space between the trays, each tray comprising:

a bubble area; and,

one or more rectangular downcomers sharing at least ~~one boundary~~ two boundaries with the bubble area, each having a length and a width wherein the length is longer than the width, and an upper and lower end, comprising:

two sloped downcomer walls along the length;

a downcomer opening at tray level; and,

one or more downward directed liquid discharge openings at its lower end;

wherein the downcomers are so positioned on the tray that bubble area is present along the length, wherein the cross-sectional area at the lower end of the downcomer is less than 40% of the cross-sectional area of the upper end of the downcomer at tray level.